



## Higher education outcomes of service-learning on students at the undergraduate and graduate levels: Illustrative parallels of the value of service-learning on the broader curriculum

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### Summary

The Language and Culture Resource Center is utilizing a community-based participatory research methodology to evaluate the higher education outcomes experienced by undergraduate and graduate-level service-learners. An analysis of quantitative and qualitative data is expected to show that undergraduate service-learning opportunities offer benefits that parallel graduate-level fieldwork, internships, and practicum experiences.

The purpose of this poster is to explain a proposed study, which seeks to explore two questions: (a) what is the value of service-learning for the students who perform the service, and (b) how might that value compare to the widely-acknowledged benefits accrued by graduate-level students who participate in fieldwork, internships, and/or practicum experiences. Simply stated, we want to measure the effects of service-learning programs on undergraduate and graduate-level college student service-learners by

gauging their own perceptions of the experience's value on their educational performance, including grades and college completion, and on their goal attainment academically, professionally, and personally. We also seek to discover if there exists a connection between students' service-learning experience and their future involvement in community engagement. In this regard, we will determine if service-learning has a long-term effect (i.e., benefits continue to be felt even after service experience concludes) on creating community-focused individuals.

With regard to our interests in graduate-level outcomes, we seek to understand the extent to which service-learning effects the outcomes for graduate students. Our perception is that most service-learning curricula are focused on undergraduate education programs. We hypothesize that many graduate programs involve experiential, community-based service precisely because of the broadly-perceived benefits of such service. However, these experiences are called "fieldwork," "practicum experience," and "internships" rather than "service-learning." We believe that there are parallel higher education outcomes that exist between these graduate-level educational service experiences and the service-learning opportunities at undergraduate levels and that identifying these parallels through research will help illustrate the value of service-learning as an academic tool.

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